



CRS Report for Congress

U.S. Forces in Iraq

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Summary

Varying media estimates of military forces in Iraq have raised concerns about the actual number of troops deployed in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). Interest in troop level deployments continue in 2008. Last year, a major announcement on a surge in troop deployments to Iraq by the President Bush included a planned gradual increase of more than 20,000 U.S. troops on the ground in Baghdad and Anbar province over several months. Since the “new strategy for Iraq” speech by the President on January 10, 2007, troop deployments gradually increased during the months of February through October in 2007 but decreased beginning in November 2007. This report provides solely Department of Defense (DOD) statistical information on U.S. forces serving in Iraq. It also provides brief official information on the military units scheduled for the next rotation of duty into Iraq. As of March 1, 2008, according to DOD, the United States had 159,700 troops stationed in Iraq — 134,900 active component and 24,800 National Guard or Reserves. For security reasons, DOD does not routinely report the composition, size, or specific destination of military forces deployed to the Persian Gulf. This report will be updated upon receipt of new DOD data. For additional information on U.S. forces, see RL34387, *Operation Iraqi Freedom: Strategies, Approaches, Results and Issues for Congress*, by Catherine Dale.

Force Levels

As of March 1, 2008, according to Department of Defense (DOD), the United States had 159,700 military personnel deployed in Iraq. Of these, 134,900 were active component personnel and 24,800 were National Guard and Reserves. **Figures 1 and 2** provide the distribution by armed service of active component personnel. These totals do not include 23,000 military support personnel in Kuwait, or naval personnel aboard ships patrolling through the Persian Gulf.¹

Amid concerns about U.S. troop levels, in a January 10, 2007 address to the nation, President Bush announced an increase of more than 20,000 U.S. troops to be deployed to Iraq as part of a new initiative in ongoing efforts to stabilize the security situation. As

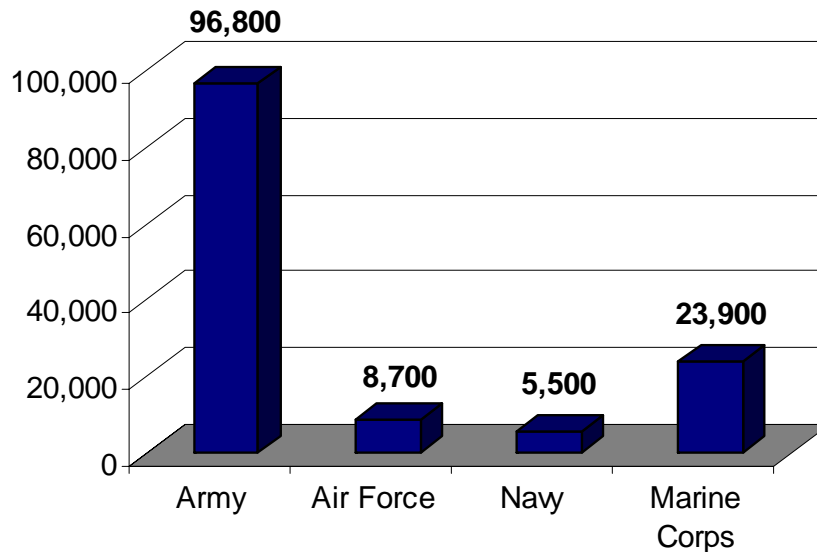
¹ DOD Fact Sheet, *Global Commitments*, December 14, 2007.

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announced, these forces were to be primarily deployed to Baghdad and Anbar province, the major current areas of unrest and conflict in Iraq. These additional force levels were originally to be accomplished primarily by a stepped-up pace of military unit rotations into Iraq and a delay for some personnel departures from that country.

However, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates announced on April 11, 2007, that all active-duty Army personnel in the U.S. Central Command area would serve 15-month tours in the region, up from the previous 12-month tour rotations.² Since the speech on troop deployments by President Bush and the announcement by Secretary Gates, a gradual increase in troop deployments in Iraq occurred between February through October 2007 but troop levels decreased beginning in November 2007. Current active duty levels, however, are still higher than reported before the surge announcement by President Bush.

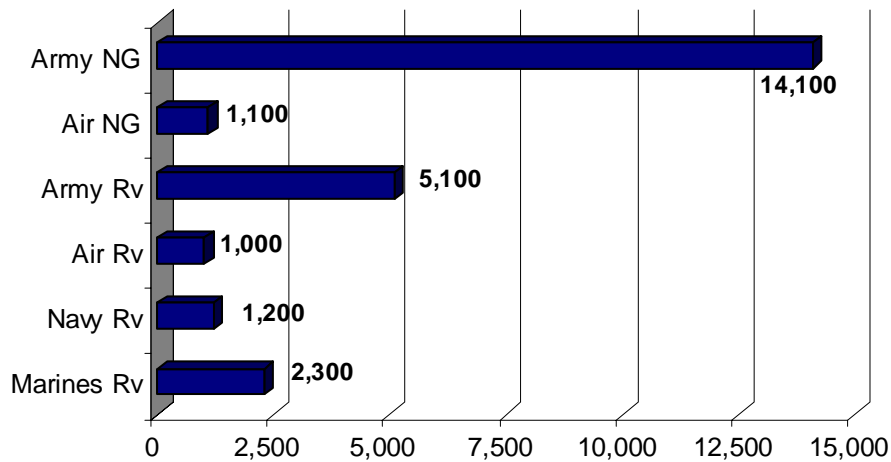
**Figure 1. Active Component Personnel in Iraq
(as of March 1, 2008)**



Source: Department of Defense, Office of the Joint Chief Staff, "Boots on Ground" data.

² American Forces Press Service, *Gates Extends Army Tours in Iraq to 15 Months*, April 11, 2007.

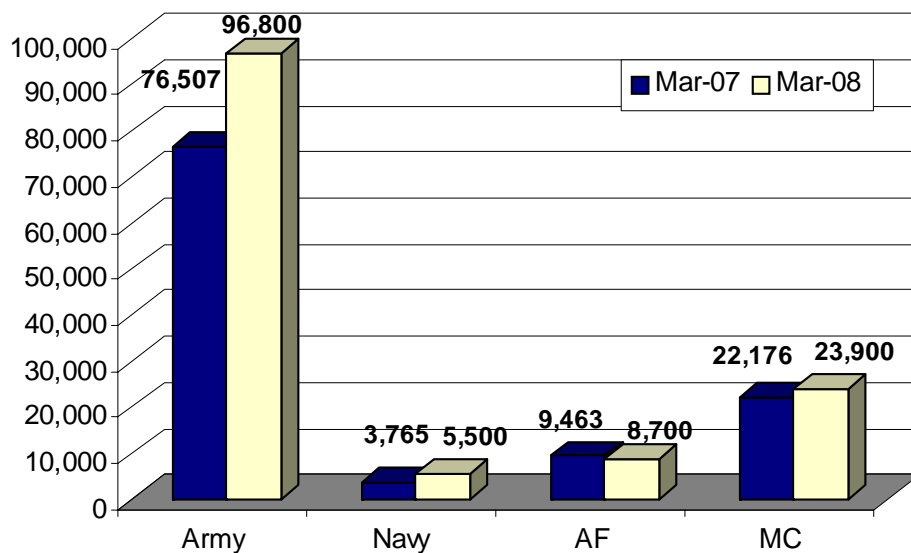
**Figure 2. Reserve Component Personnel in Iraq
(as of March 1, 2008)**



Source: Department of Defense, Office of the Joint Chief Staff, "Boots on Ground" data.

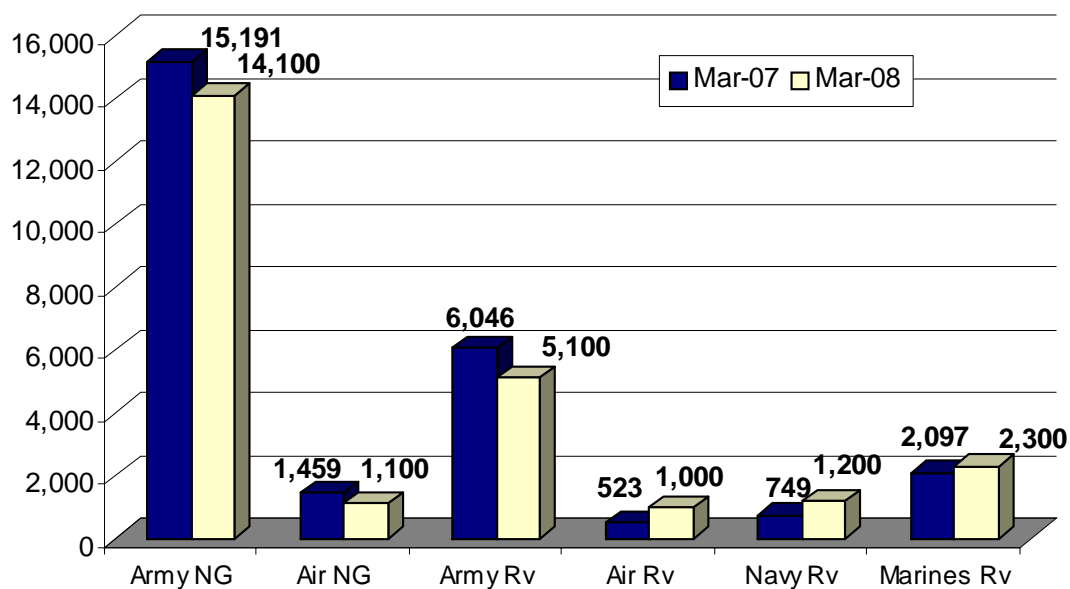
Comparative Operation Iraqi Freedom U.S. Force Levels. Overall U.S. force levels in Iraq declined from November 2005 to January 2007, particularly the Reserve Component. After a slight increase in February 2007, the surge built up troop levels through October 2007. Based on DOD statistics, **Figures 3 through 6** provide comparative data on both active and reserve component force levels, including month-to-month and year-to-year comparisons of U.S. troops in Iraq. DOD officials have declined to project the timing or size of future force reductions, stating these will depend upon the security situation within Iraq.

**Figure 3. OIF Active Component Force Levels
(March 2007/March 2008)**



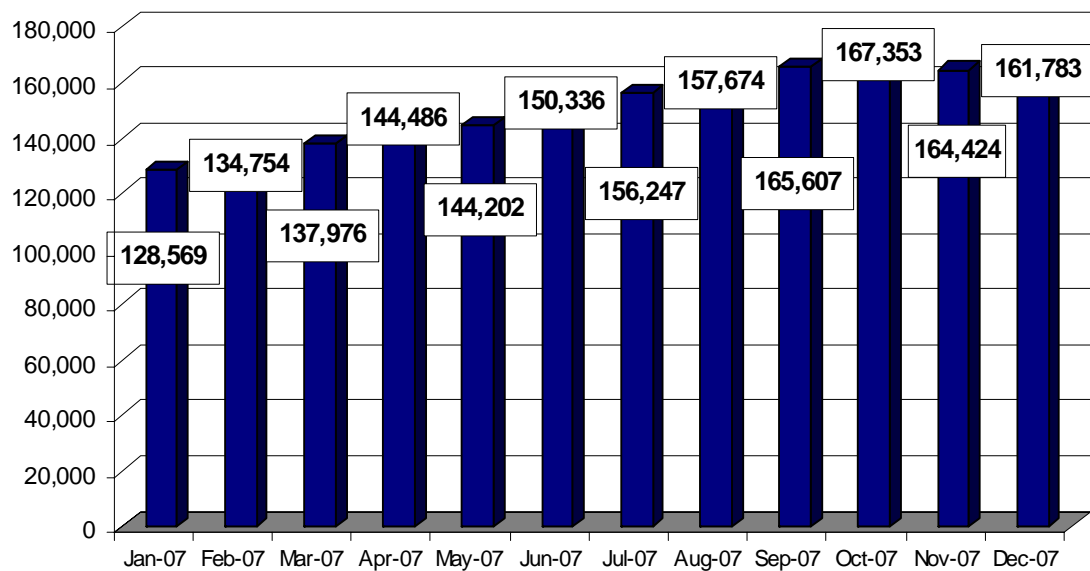
Source: Department of Defense, Office of Joint Chief Staff, "Boots on Ground" data.

**Figure 4. OIF Reserve Component Force Levels
(March 2007/March 2008)**



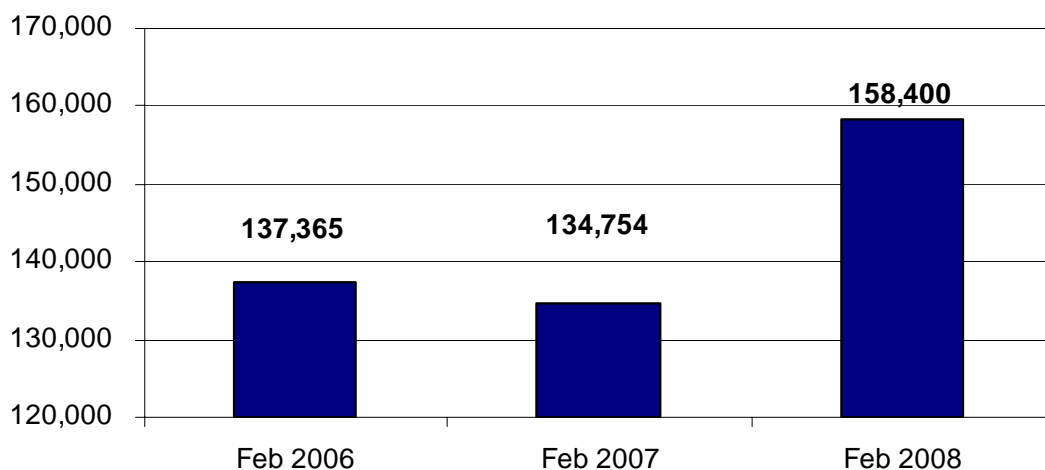
Source: Department of Defense, Office of the Joint Chief Staff, “Boots on Ground” data.

**Figure 5. Comparative U.S. Force Levels in Iraq
(January 2007/December 2007)**



Source: Department of Defense, Office of the Joint Chief Staff, “Boots on Ground” data, January 1, 2007, through December 1, 2007.

**Figure 6. Comparative U.S. Force Levels in Iraq
(Years 2006, 2007, 2008)**



Source: Department of Defense, Office of the Joint Chief Staff, “Boots on Ground” data.

Operation Iraqi Freedom Troop Rotations. On December 3, 2007, DOD announced its latest scheduled troop deployments for unit rotations to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). These planned 2009 Army National Guard unit deployments to Iraq supplement earlier announcements involving 2008 Army or Marine Corps units. These rotations are summarized in **Table 1** below.

**Table 1. Operation Iraqi Freedom:
2008 and 2009 Rotational Units**

Military Unit	Home Military Base	Rotation to Iraq
Army		
3 rd Brigade, 4 th Infantry Division	Fort Carson, CO	Early 2008
10 th Mountain Division, Headquarters	Fort Drum, NY	Spring 2008
Marine Corps		
1 Marine Expeditionary Force Headquarters	Camp Pendleton, CA	Early 2008
Regimental Combat Team 1	Camp Pendleton, CA	Early 2008
Regimental Combat Team 5	Camp Pendleton, CA	Early 2008

Military Unit	Home Military Base	Rotation to Iraq
Army National Guard		
4 th Brigade, 4 th Infantry Division	Fort Hood, TX	Summer 2008
30 th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, North Carolina National Guard	Clinton, NC	Summer 2008
56 th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 28 th Infantry Division, Pennsylvania National Guard	Philadelphia, PA	Summer 2008
56 th Brigade Combat Team, 36 th Infantry Division, Texas National Guard	Fort Worth, TX	Summer 2008
29 th Brigade Combat Team, Hawaii National Guard	Kalaeloa, HI	Summer 2008
81 st Brigade Combat Team, Washington National Guard	Seattle, WA	Summer 2008
45 th Fires Brigade, Oklahoma National Guard	Enid, OK	Summer 2008
50 th Brigade Combat Team, New Jersey National Guard	Lawrenceville, NJ	Summer 2008
32 nd Brigade Combat Team, Wisconsin National Guard	Madison, WI	Summer 2009
41 st Brigade Combat Team, Oregon National Guard	Tigard, OR	Summer 2009
155 th Brigade Combat Team, Mississippi National Guard	Lucedale, MS	Summer 2009

Source: DOD News Releases July, October, and December 2007.

These rotations and extensions of active duty Army tours to 15 months will maintain U.S. military capacity at 20 brigade or regimental combat teams on the ground in Iraq. Future policy and logistics announcements may change the number of scheduled units assigned to Iraq.